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TAGS: KMDR KPAO OIIP OPRC PGOV PREL PK

SUBJECT: SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JANUARY 21, 2010

Summary: Coverage of Secretary of Defense Gates' visit to the region dominated all major newspapers on Thursday morning. Media reported Secretary Gates' warning that Al Qaeda could trigger a war between India and Pakistan, and that "India's patience will be limited if there is a repeat of 26/11." The largest Urdu language daily, "Jang" and its sister English paper, "The News," published an exclusive op-ed by Secretary Gates entitled, "U.S. commitment to Pakistan's future." "The Nation" reported that "tough sessions" are expected between Secretary Gates and the GOP regarding Indian's role in Afghanistan. Some papers also covered FBI Director Mueller's remarks that Al Qaeda and its offshoots are spreading. Papers also carried State Department Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism Benjamin's statement that Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) could become a threat to the West. On the economic front, several dailies reported that the U.S. will release \$480 million to Pakistan in January under the Coalition Support Fund. Possible fallout of the Supreme Court's judgment against the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) continued to garner media attention, with reports that President Zardari and Prime Minister Gilani were making "hectic consultations" with their aides, and that the government may file a new petition against the verdict. Reports of the announcement of Mehsud tribal jirga to handover Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) chief Hakeemullah to the government also received extensive coverage. All newspapers reported a bomb blast that injured an NWFP Assembly member in Peshawar. End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: Al Qaeda Can Trigger Indo-Pak War: Gates, US Defence Secretary Says India's Patience Will Be Limited If There Is A Repeat Of 26/11 - "Daily Times" (01/21)

"US Defence Secretary Robert Gates on Wednesday warned that South Asian militant groups were seeking to destabilize the entire region and could trigger a war between Pakistan and India." (Story also front paged in all newspapers)

News Story: Terror Groups Aim To Destabilize Region, Says Gates - "Dawn" (01/21)

"A syndicate of terror groups affiliated with Al Qaeda might try to start a war between India and Pakistan as part of an organized effort to sow upheaval across South Asia, US Defence Secretary Robert Gates said on Wednesday."

News Story: Will India Be Assigned A Major Role, Tough Talks Expected with Gates - "The Nation" (01/21)

"In a bid to defend its interest in the region, Pakistan is said to have decided to walkout from the upcoming London Conference on Afghanistan, to be held on January 28, in case the Organizers offer India a leading role in Afghanistan. Well-placed sources told The Nation on good authority that the message from the Presidency and PM Secretariat to the higher authorities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to defend country's interest at any cost, at a meeting to be held in Dubai on 26 January, just two days before inaugural session of International conference on Afghanistan to be held in London."

News Story: LeT A Global Threat: US - "Dawn (01/21)

"Pakistan-based banned group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), blamed for the Mumbai attacks, could become a threat to the West like Al Qaeda, a US counter-terrorism official warned on Wednesday. 'Should it decide that it wants to either compete with Al Qaeda or supplant Al Qaeda it would ... present itself as an extremely formidable terrorist opponent,' Daniel Benjamin told reporters."

News Story: Qaeda Spreading, Rebuilding: FBI - "Daily Times" (01/21)

"Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Robert Mueller on Wednesday said that Al Qaeda and its offshoots were spreading and rebuilding. He said the US had dismantled much of Al Qaeda's infrastructure in Afghanistan, 'but the terror network and its associated groups are rebuilding in Pakistan, Yemen, and the Horn of Africa'."

News Story: Force Not Only Option To Fight Terror: Gilani - "Dawn" (01/21)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has said that the use of force is not the only option to confront terrorists and extremists. Political means, along with social and economic development, were potent tools to fight the menace, he added."

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: Mehsud Jirga Agrees To Hand Over Hakimullah - "The News" (01/21)

"A Jirga of the Mehsud tribe on Wednesday agreed to hand over their 378 wanted men, including the chief of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Hakimullah Mehsud, to the government and announced to fully support the government in maintaining peace and reconstruction process."

News Story: US Equipment Remains In Sihala But Trainers Disappear - "The Nation" (01/21)

"Despite a vociferous announcement made by the Government about closing down the American-supervised anti-terrorism camp at the Police Training College Sihala, nothing has been done in the shifting of baggage and equipments of US trainers from the College. Reliable sources said that dozens of containers belonging to US trainers were still present on the college premises."

News Story: Import Of More Bullet-Proof Vehicles For Embassies Banned - "Express" (01/21)

"To counter the suspicious activities of Americans in the country, the Pakistan government, on the recommendation of law-enforcement agencies, has imposed a ban on the import of more bullet-proof vehicles by foreign diplomatic missions beyond their allocated quota. A proposal for the checking of intelligence gadgets installed in the Americans' vehicles is also under consideration."

News Story: ANP Lawmaker Injured In Peshawar Attack- "Daily Times" (01/21)

"An Awami National Party member of the provincial assembly was injured along with four others in a remote-controlled bomb explosion on Wednesday, police said."

News Story: Lashkar Kills 5 Taliban In Mohmand - "Daily Times" (01/21)

"As many as five Taliban including Ghulam alias Adil, a key

commander, were killed and two others injured in a raid conducted by members of the peace committee at Kheuwzai area of Mohmand Agency, the Frontier Corps Media Cell said on Wednesday."

News Story: College Graduate Plotted US Troops' Murder, Court Told - "Dawn" (01/21)

"A New York college graduate, Adis Medujanin, who travelled to Pakistan in 2008 to apparently attend Al Qaeda training camp, conspired to kill American service members in Afghanistan, a US federal prosecutor told a Brooklyn court on Tuesday."

News Story: Pak Warns India Against Violations - "The Nation" (01/21)

"Pakistan on Wednesday lodged a strong protest with India over unprovoked firing that killed two of its soldiers in Keil sector, Rawalakot, on Tuesday."

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: Govt In Panic, Short Of Time - "The News" (01/21)

"President Asif Ali Zardari was making hectic consultations with his political aides on Wednesday night after it became apparent that the detailed judgment by the full bench of the Supreme Court was about to trigger a new decisive court battle that might deal a fatal blow to his constitutional eligibility to serve as the President of Pakistan, authoritative sources have revealed."

News Story: Govt May File New Petition Against NRO Verdict - "Dawn" (01/21)

"The government hinted in the National Assembly on Wednesday it could file another review petition after studying the Supreme Court's detailed ruling against the controversial Musharraf-era National Reconciliation Ordinance, but dismissed opposition fears of a clash with the superior judiciary."

News Story: PM Rules Out Clash Of Institutions - "The News" (01/21)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday reiterated his government's stance on the implementation of the detailed SC judgment on the NRO. 'At the moment, my legal and constitutional experts are examining the detailed judgment of the Supreme Court and once the process is complete, the government would implement it in accordance with the law and the Constitution,' he said while talking to newsmen during a visit to the Utility Stores Corporation at G-9 (Karachi Company) here on Wednesday."

News Story: FC Running Parallel Govt, Says Raisani - "Dawn" (01/21)

"Chief Minister Nawab Aslam Raisani has accused the Frontier Corps of running a parallel government in Balochistan. In a statement issued here on Wednesday, the chief minister said that FC's attitude had harmed the ongoing reconciliation process and, as a result, the situation had worsened."

ECONOMY/ENVIRONMENT

News Story: US To Provide \$480m During January: Tareen - "Daily Times" (01/21)

"The US will release \$480 million to Pakistan during January under the Coalition Support Fund (CSF) and allocations for internally displaced persons (IDPs), federal Finance Minister Shaukat Tareen said on Wednesday."

MISCELLANEOUS

Qws Story: Senate Approves Bill To Curb Harassment Of Working Women- "Dawn" (01/21)

"The Senate approved on Wednesday a bill providing protection to women against sexual harassment at workplaces and rejected an amendment introduced by members belonging to religious parties, including the JUI-F, Jamaat-i-Islami and Jamiat Ahle Hadith."

EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

Opinion: Our Commitment To Pakistan, an op-ed by U.S. Defence Secretary Robert M Gates in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The NeQ (cir. 55,000) (01/21)

" Even Q much is still made in the media of a "trust deficit" between our nations. As I meet with Pakistan's civilian and military leaders during my visit, I will emphasize that the United States wishes to relinquish the grievances of the past - grievances held by both sides - and instead focus on the promise of the future. I will repeat President Obama's message that the United States is fully committed to a stable, long-term, strategic partnership with a democratic Pakistan - an enduring relationship based on shared interests and mutual respect that will continue to expand and deepen in the future on many levels, from security cooperation to economic development. . . . "

Opinion: Dead Or Alive, an op-ed by Charles Ferndale in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/21)

" So strong are the arguments in favor of the hypothesis that Osama bin Laden is dead, that we should ask why Hilary Clinton, General Stanley McChrystal and President Barrack Obama still talk about the need to search for him in Pakistan and to capture him. Since the onus is now firmly upon anyone claiming that Bin Laden is alive to give us good reasons to believe it, and since no one who makes that claim ever offers such reasons, and since it is not credible that the officials I have just mentioned do not know that Bin Laden is almost certainly dead, we are forced to conclude that they are using Bin Laden's supposed existence as one of the four major fictions designed to justify their interventions in the Af-Pak region. . . . "

Opinion: Engaging with the US - II , an op-ed by Syed Talat Hussain in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (01/21)

" Sheeting questionable cooperation with Washington in ambiguity only fed speculation that the country's sovereignty was being compromised under US pressure. Also, this 'open-endedness' in our dealings with the US allowed Washington incredible leeway to interpret different commitments differently at different times. . . . "

Editorial: Indo-Pak Relations; America Should Stop Interference, an editorial note in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (01/21)

"National Assembly Committee on Commerce Chairman Khurram Dastgir has said that America is putting severe pressure on Pakistan for giving India passage for trade with Afghanistan.... What Khurram Dastgir said has this fact that America looks for opportunities to protect Indian interests in all the fields.... America wants to make Pakistan a satellite of India. American policy makers should know that Pakistan detests this American attitude. India should resolve the Kashmir disputes if it wants to have friendship with Pakistan.... America should be told in categorical terms that unless India resolves Kashmir issue the trade transit facility will not be given to India.... If America is not willing to mediate for Pakistan-India relations then it should not as well interfere in other matters."

Editorial: Supreme Court's detailed verdict, an editorial in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (01/21)

"For the first time in the country's history, a step has been taken to make the rich, the influential and the powerful people of this country abide by rule of law....If this [verdict] is the first step towards judiciary's independence, strengthening of democracy, corruption-free politics, public welfare - then the accused should take the second step towards justice without any fear in their hearts."

Editorial: Supreme Court verdict on NRO, an editorial note in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (01/21)

"The detailed judgment has clarified many points which were vague in the Supreme Court short order on NRO... However, the Supreme Court has now clarified that no one, including the President, is exempt. It is obvious that the government experts will now file appeals for review, opening a new Pandora's Box. It seems as though things will not be in the government's control now. The legal aspects of this case are now clear; the ball is now in the political parties' court."

Opinion: The Evil One, an op-ed by I. M. Mohsin in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/21)

". . . . The USA's major strength still is not its military juggernaut which projects her as 'the evil one'. It is the intellectual freedom to amass and disseminate knowledge. The leadership has to gel their diversity and commonality of interests to an optimal level. Only then would it shed its current stigma. The United States has to find a way out with Pakistan's help; It cannot 'occupy' the area nor abandon it a la 1990."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)

Patterson